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ABSTRACT

Addressing the increasing importance of listening skills in the business world, this annotated bibliography contains 22 items from the ERIC database from 1979 to 1988. The sources cited in the first section of the bibliography are primarily concerned with teaching techniques and strategies for teachers of secondary and higher education business classes, although a few sources are meant for students, and some references are for teaching materials, skills assessment instruments, and learning modules. The second section presents citations of recent research on such topics as the current state of comprehension training in business courses, barriers to effective communication, and strategies used to improve listening skills in business communication settings. (SR)

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Listening Skills in Business

by Michael Shermis

The importance of listening skills to the business world has greatly increased as corporations place more emphasis on good communication skills. This increased emphasis has occurred because of changes in corporate structure and philosophy, the high proportion of work time spent communicating, and the costs of ineffective communication in business. Listening instruction has been added to formal training programs being offered by several corporations, to the curriculum in elementary and secondary education, and to courses at the university level. The ERIC database provides a number of sources which may be used for listening instruction in Business English and Business Communication.

The sources cited in the first section of this bibliography are primarily concerned with techniques and strategies for teachers of secondary and higher education business classes, although there are a few sources meant for students. References are also provided for teaching materials, skills assessment instruments, and learning modules. The second section presents citations of recent research on such topics as the current state of comprehension training in business courses, barriers to effective communication, and strategies used to improve listening skills in business communication settings.

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Teaching Techniques and Strategies

Bell, George R. "Listen and You Shall Hear," *Secretary*, v47 n9 p8-9 Nov-Dec 1987. [Available from Professional Secretaries International, 301 East Armour Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64111-1299]

Reviews the relative importance of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and argues that the average adult does not listen efficiently. Presents the AIM (Attention, Interest, Motivation) Technique for improving listening skills.

Brownell, Judi. "A Model for Listening Instruction: Management Applications," *Bulletin of the Asso-*

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ciation for Business Communication, v48 n3 p39-44 Sep 1985.

Summarizes several representative listening texts and current approaches to listening. Suggests a definition of listening that provides educators with a comprehensive framework for organizing listening instruction.

Burgenbauch, Susan; Cooney, Joe. *Regional Occupational Program (ROP) Office Occupations Entry Standards Assessment.* San Mateo County Office of Education, Redwood City, CA, 1979. 15 p. [ED 237 817]

Provides a skills assessment instrument to determine if a student has the basic mathematics, reading, writing, and listening skills that are prerequisites for training for office occupations.

Business English. Vocational Education Curriculum Guide. Bulletin 1721. Louisiana State Department of Education, Division of Vocational Education, Baton Rouge, LA, 1984. 310 p. [ED 248 351]

Consists of materials for use in teaching a course in business English for high school students. Addresses the following topics in individual units: the fundamentals of communication, listening skills, oral communications, telephone communications, information resources, reading and vocabulary, the mechanics of writing, grammar and usage, business reports, business letters and memos, and employment procedures.

Communication. Listen, Speak, Write, Use. School of Business, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA. 1986. 204 p. [ED 278 870]

An instructional unit intended to help secondary and post-secondary business students develop their communications skills.

Communications Skills I. Reading Skills, Writing Skills, Using a Newspaper. Ohio State Dept. of Education, Div. of Vocational Education, Columbus, OH, 1984. 79 p. [ED 274 873]

This student workbook contains instructional units dealing with developing reading, writing, and listening skills and using a newspaper. The unit on listening skills deals with learning to listen and evaluating listening skills.

Eads, Freeman D.; and others. *Technical Communications I.* Instructor Edition. University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR, 1983. 314 p. [ED 250 452; microfiche copy available from EDRS; paper copy not available]

Consists of materials for use in helping students enrolled in postsecondary vocational or technical education programs to master technical communications skills. Listening skills (communication obstacles and oral presentations) are addressed in one of the 13 individual units of the guide. Each unit contains some or all of the following components: a unit objective, specific performance objectives, suggested activities for the instructor, a list of references, information sheets, transparency masters, assignment sheets, a test evaluation instrument, and test answers.

Gibbs, Meada; and others. "How to Teach Effective Listening Skills in a Basic Business Communication Class," *Bulletin of the Association for Business Communication,* v48 n2 p30-34 Jun 1985.

Points out that listening can be taught. Discusses activities and techniques to use, including commercially-produced or teacher-prepared rating instruments, listening teams, student logs, brief encounters, and films.

Grosse, Christine Uber. "Authentic Listening Materials for Business English." Proceedings of the 5th Annual Eastern Michigan University Conference on Languages for Business and the Professions, 1986. 18 p. [ED 295 435]

Contends that authentic listening materials are appropriate and desirable for instruction in English as a second language (ESL) for business purposes for several reasons: they have high interest, leading to enhanced motivation and increased opportunity for learning; they contain many natural redundancies and repetitions that facilitate comprehension; and they are rich in the target culture. Suggests that despite a lack of commercially available materials for business ESL, other sources can be tapped for authentic listening materials, such as tapes of business-related radio and television programs and commercials, teacher-made tapes of interviews or sales talks with local business people, taped university lectures, guest speakers in class, and field trips.

Harris, Thomas E. "Effective Teaching of Business Communications: Responding to Reported Business Needs." Paper presented at the Meeting of the Eastern Regional Conference of the American Business Communication Association, 1983. 25 p. [ED 235 532]

Indicates that skills in listening to and motivating people need to be emphasized more in undergraduate business communication courses.

Presents three theories of motivation--Maslow's hierarchy of needs, McClelland's achievement motive, and Hersberg's motivation-hygiene theory--that can introduce students to the systems perspective, an approach suggesting that workers' motivations can only be understood in relationship to their work setting. Suggests that (1) to develop skill in listening, students must develop active feedback techniques (encouraging, restating, reflecting, and summarizing); and (2) by responding to hypothetical examples, students can gain skill in listening and thus in changing people's need for sympathy, fame, power, and prestige into positive motivational factors--desire for empathy, recognition, cooperation, and respect.

"How To Teach Interpersonal Communication Techniques in a Basic Business Communication Course," *Bulletin of the Association for Business Communication,* v50 n4 p24-28 Dec 1987.

Defines interpersonal communication and suggests classroom activities for students in business communication courses to help them (1) assess their own interpersonal skills; (2) observe and interpret nonverbal cues; (3) listen and speak effectively; and (4) provide and interpret feedback.

Mitchell, Robert B. "Integrating the Development of Interpersonal, Listening, Speaking, and Written Communication Skills—Concluding the Business Commu- nication Course with Realism," *Bulletin of the Association for Business Communication,* v51 n2 p27-29 Jun 1988.

Advocates the use of a group sales project, an activity which integrates the oral and written communication skills important in the work place, to culminate the business communication course.

Peterson, Jane. *Instructor Resource Manual for Cooperative Education Seminars: Why Are Communication Skills Important Today? [and] Speaking and Listening. Cooperative Education, Book 1.* Richland College, Dallas, TX, 1983. 55 p. [ED 227 905]

Contains two learning modules focusing on basic communication and on speaking and listening skills. Examines the growing emphasis on communication skills in business, emphasizing changes in corporate structure and philosophy, the amount of work time spent communicating, and the costs of ineffective communication in business. Discusses the role of the sender, receiver, message, and environment in the communication process; corporate concerns about this process; and the influences of personal life orientations, perceptions, and expectations, and of position, stereotyping, and individual labels on effective communication. Examines one- and two-way communication, as well as the speaker's responsibility for creating a climate conducive to effective communication, for being direct, for using specific but simple words and phrases, for requesting feedback, and for listening carefully. It also considers ways of communicating more effectively by adjusting one's attitude, using open-ended questions, and listening; and ways to improve listening habits.

Wallace, Ray. "Nonnative Business Communication Students: Integrating the Four Language Skills," *Bulletin of the Association for Business Communication,* v49 n2 p32 Jun 1986.

Describes an assignment for students in content-based classes for English as a second language in which they read, listen, discuss, and write about a current topic in the business world.

Recent Research

Bednar, Anita S.; Olney, Robert J. "Communication Needs of Recent Graduates," *Bulletin of the Association for Business Communication,* v50 n4 p22-23 Dec 1987.

Presents a study in which entry-level employees who recently graduated with business degrees were surveyed to discover what forms of communication they used most, which they felt were most important, and what types of communication problems interfered with their work.

Cantrill, James G.; Clark, Susan M. "The Comprehension of Poor Communication in the Business Setting: A Neglected Pedagogical Focus." Paper presented at the 73rd Annual Meeting of the Eastern Communication Association, 1982. 28 p. [ED 285 208]

Analyzes the current state of comprehension training in business courses. Presents the theoretical perspectives by which the basis of noncomprehension can be understood, such as message reception constrained by ambiguity, by egocentrism, and by relational considerations. Determines that the best theoretical underpinning to comprehension of problematic messages is the information-processing approach to human interaction, which makes use of schemata.

Carstens, Jerald. "Perceptions of C.E.O.s, Personnel Managers, and Training Directors of Communication Practices and Listening Behavior in Large-Scale Organizations." Paper presented at

the 68th Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association, 1982. 26 p. [ED 224 067]

Conducts a survey to assess the importance of listening and the deficiency in that skill and to identify existing listening training programs for future study. Finds that (1) sending messages was perceived as more important than receiving them (however, listening, a receptive skill, was considered more important than reading and speaking); (2) receptive skills were more important in the oral medium, while expressive skills were more important in the written mode; and (3) overall, the oral medium was more important. Suggests that improving listening skills deserves special attention from both trainers and communication educators.

Golen, Steven. "Interpersonal Communication Barriers Identified by Business Communication Students," *Journal of Education for Business,* v61 n2 p64-67 Nov 1985.

Presents a study conducted to determine which barriers to effective communication are perceived as most serious by business communication students and to test for differences in the seriousness of the communication barriers based on various student characteristics.

Smeltzer, Larry R.; Watson, Kittie W. "Improving Listening Skills Used in Business: An Empirical Comparison of Discussion Length, Modeling and Level of Incentive." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southwest Division of the American Business Communication Association, 1983. 25 p. [ED 229 809]

Compares strategies used to improve listening skills in business communication settings. Finds that (1) both class discussion and high incentive increased scores on a listening test; (2) students exposed to a lecture plus a videotape asked more questions than the other students; and (3) the quality of the student summaries was higher and notes were taken more frequently by students exposed to a lecture than by students not exposed to it.

Smeltzer, Larry R.; Watson, Kittie W. "Listening: An Empirical Comparison of Discussion Length and Level of Incentive," *Central States Speech Journal,* v35 n3 p166-70 Fall 1984.

Presents an experiment on student scores on listening tests which increased as a result of a 45-minute class discussion on listening skills and a high-incentive condition: telling students that if they did not score well on the test, a written report on listening would be required.

Smeltzer, Larry R.; Watson, Kittie W. "A Test of Instructional Strategies for Listening Improvement in a Simulated Business Setting," *Journal of Business Commu- nication,* v22 n4 p33-42 Fall 1985.

Finds that (1) students exposed to any three of the instructional strategies (lecture, video role model, and lecture plus a role model) produced better summaries and took more notes than the control group; and (2) those exposed to the video role model asked the most questions.

West, Judy Ferguson. "Recent Federal Legislation Added Listening as a Determinant of Literacy: Educators Must Provide Listening Instruction." Paper presented at the Meeting of the Southwest Division of the American Business Communication Association, 1983. 20 p. [ED 228 674]

States that listening skills are the most used and least taught of the communication skills. Discusses (1) the addition of listening and speaking to much of the curriculum after the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was passed; (2) how the number of universities offering separate listening courses has increased in response to demands from the business and professional community; and (3) how several corporations, realizing the importance of effective listening, have provided formal training programs in listening. Cites purposes of effective listening and factors critical to one's listening ability.

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